



Poisoning Prevention

Hawai'i Injury Prevention Plan 2012-2017

Injury Prevention Advisory Committee

Injury Prevention and Control Section

Background and Accomplishments

The Hawai'i State Department of Health, Injury Prevention and Control Section (IPCS) has collaborated with partners to address different types of poisonings among different populations.

- ▶ IPCS strongly supports the Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition (KIPC) in their ongoing efforts to prevent poisoning.
 - In 2009, KIPC received a grant from the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture related to the recognition and management of pesticide-related injuries. KIPC has conducted poisoning prevention education and outreach activities for the public to increase awareness of household pesticide exposures and reduce exposures in and around households.
 - KIPC works to raise public awareness about, and increase use of, the 24 hour Hawai'i poison control hotline for information about potential poisonings and medications.
- ▶ In 2010, IPCS began serving as a clearinghouse to disseminate poisoning prevention materials to community partners. Materials disseminated to pediatricians, preschools, hospitals, and health care clinics on all islands include magnets and stickers to promote the Hawai'i poison control hotline, poisoning prevention information fact sheets, "No Get Hurt" poisoning prevention posters, and information on the correct use of pesticides from the Department of Agriculture.
 - As part of the "No Get Hurt" campaign, IPCS printed poisoning prevention posters in 2010 for use by the Department of Health Women Infant and Children (WIC) Services Branch and other community partners.
- ▶ IPCS collaborated with a community partner to analyze data about poisonings from opioids in Honolulu County between 2004-2008. The results of this analysis showed the most common way to access opiates was through a personal prescription (46% of the victims). Only a minority of victims accessed opiates through prescriptions written for other people (4%), or purchased drugs illicitly (4%). However, access to opiates was not known for a large proportion (41%) of the victims, limiting the reliability of this data source.
- ▶ In 1992, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) established Hawai'i's Prescription Drug Monitoring System (PDM) - one of the best practices for determining misuse and abuse of controlled substances. In 2012, improvements were made to the program to ensure the PDM database is effectively used and maintained. In addition to maintaining the PDM system, DPS is required to "carry out educational programs designed to prevent and determine misuse and abuse of controlled substances" (HRS 329-58).
- ▶ In 2011, IPCS began collaborating with state and community organizations working on STD/AIDS and substance abuse prevention in an effort to understand and address the increase in prescription drug overdoses.

Recommendations

While poisoning among children has decreased with interventions such as childproof caps, the past few years have revealed dramatic increases in prescription drug overdoses (CDC, 2011b). IPCS analyzed trend data for poisoning fatalities and injuries, including prescription drug overdoses, and conducted a comprehensive review of current best practices. Results from this analysis formed the basis for the recommendations below.

IPCS first presented results of the analysis to the Department of Health, STD/AIDS Prevention Branch and the CHOW Project (The Community Health Outreach Work to Prevent AIDS Project), which were subsequently shared with the Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances (HACDACS). As set forth by the Legislature, HACDACS is the primary advisory body to the Departments of Public Safety and Health and to the Legislature, and an appropriate partner to support in developing policy changes for the prevention of prescription drug overdoses.

Partners from public and private sectors (e.g., public safety, insurance, medicine, pharmacology, substance abuse treatment, law enforcement) can all help reduce poisonings, especially prescription drug overdoses, in Hawai'i.

Recommendation 1: Enhance use of data resources to understand the problem of prescription drug overdoses in Hawai'i and facilitate prevention efforts

To better address the issue of prescription drug overdoses, more data and analyses are necessary. Death certificates describe an overall increasing trend but provide limited data on the type of drugs causing deaths. Autopsy data provides more information about deaths due to prescription drugs, including the specific substances involved and whether victims accessed drugs through legal or illegal means, although information about access is missing from a significant proportion of autopsy records. Therefore, linking autopsy data with the PDM database would help describe access to the specific substances involved in overdoses and provide a clearer picture of drug overdose fatalities in Hawai'i.

Additional data sources such as survey-based data and fatality reviews that go beyond information gathered for autopsy reviews, would add to the body of knowledge about prescription drug use and practices, and help identify risk factors and effective prevention measures.

Recommended Next Steps

- ▶ Determine ability to gain access to the Department of Public Safety's PDM database and other state agencies' data related to drug poisoning (Medicaid, workers' compensation data).
- ▶ Link death certificate and autopsy records with the PDM database to learn more about decedents' access to drugs.
- ▶ Use additional data sources to describe general drug use and poisoning in the population and indicate areas for further research (i.e., Hawai'i Health Information Center, Trauma Registry, Poison Center Data, Behavioral Risk Factor System Survey, Youth Risk Behavior Survey).

► Provide comprehensive data and injury prevention expertise to support partnerships and strategies for addressing prescription drug overdoses. Key partners include:

- The Hawai'i Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances
- Hawai'i State Department of Health Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division
- Hawai'i State Department of Health STD/AIDs Branch
- The CHOW Project (The Community Health Outreach Work to Prevent AIDS Project)
- Hawai'i Substance Abuse Coalition
- Hawai'i State Department of Public Safety
- Hospitals and trauma centers
- First responders
- County police departments
- Physicians and pharmacists
- Insurance companies
- Community organizations

Recommendation 2: Identify and support enactment of policies and practices that reduce both inappropriate and illegal prescribing, and evaluate their effectiveness

Promising policies and practices target the prescribing practices of health care providers to help prevent prescription drug abuses and overdoses while allowing safe and effective pain management. These include prescription drug monitoring programs, patient review and restriction programs, health care provider accountability, laws and education to prevent prescription drug abuse and diversion, and better access to substance abuse treatment, including risk reduction strategies and education. Increasing capacity of pharmacists and other prescribers to educate patients about overdose can also leverage prevention efforts. These interventions need to be evaluated locally to determine their effectiveness in reducing prescription drug overdose deaths (CDC, 2011b).

States play key roles in regulating the use of prescription drugs and the practices of prescribers and pharmacists, and in financing and regulating health care for people with Medicaid - a group at greater risk for overdose (CDC, 2011a).

State agencies need to work in partnership with organizations in the private sector from health care and related fields to bring about changes in organizational practices. Implementing screening and brief intervention and referral and treatment protocols in state-funded trauma centers, and adding screening for potential misuse and abuse of prescription drugs can serve as a model practice for other hospitals and health care systems to adopt. As important potential users of the PDM database, emergency physicians are one of the key partners in prescription drug overdose prevention efforts.

Recommended Next Steps

- ▶ Collaborate with the Department of Public Safety to support and evaluate use of the Hawai'i Prescription Drug Monitoring System.
- ▶ Work with organizations such as the American College of Emergency Physicians, the Hawai'i Medical Association, Hawai'i pharmacy associations, health care systems, and legislators to develop and enact policies that support prescribing practices to reduce prescription drug misuse and abuse.
- ▶ Collaborate with state-funded trauma centers across the state to adapt screening and brief intervention practices that identify potential prescription misuse and abuse problems. Develop policies to support the intervention and share them with other health care settings as a model for implementing similar interventions (Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership, 2010).
- ▶ Collaborate with the Hawai'i Board of Pharmacy, the Hawai'i Pharmacists Association, and the Hawai'i Community Pharmacists Association to identify and promote educational strategies for pharmacists to help regulate the use of prescription drugs.
- ▶ Partner with insurance companies, and physician and pharmacy associations to educate the public on the potential misuse of drugs received from friends and family.
- ▶ Support risk reduction training for first responders, health care providers, and other service providers to reduce the risk of death from opioid overdoses.

Recommendation 3: Support primary poisoning prevention education and maintenance of the poison information hotline

Poisoning prevention education and the poison information hotline encourage appropriate actions that can reduce poisoning injuries, fatalities, and their associated hospital and health care costs. In addition to responding to calls for diagnostic or treatment recommendations on poison exposure for which callers would otherwise go to the emergency department, health care providers rely on the hotline for toxicology expertise in handling severe overdoses. The poison hotline also identifies and alerts the public to poisoning trends, and provides a drug identification service to callers that reduces drug errors from improper use of medications.

Recommended Next Steps

- ▶ Continue collaborating with KIPC to provide educational materials and promote the poison information hotline.
- ▶ Use data collected from the poison information hotline to identify trends and problem areas and inform prevention strategies.
- ▶ Help secure continued funding for the poison information hotline.